



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell, Commissioner*

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## News Release

January 11, 2012

### Governor's Workforce Cabinet Announces STEM Works Schools

LITTLE ROCK — The Governor's Workforce Cabinet today announces that 15 districts throughout the state and one technical center have been chosen as the first participants in the administration's STEM Works initiative.

"We're proud that a diverse range of schools applied to participate in our STEM Works program," Governor Mike Beebe said. "In Arkansas, education and economic development must work hand in hand to build the strong workforce so important to our state's future prosperity. These schools will be leaders in this work."

STEM is short for "Science, Technology, Engineering and Math." Governor Beebe on Aug. 16, 2011, announced the creation of STEM Works with the aim of educating more K-12 students in the fields that need the most qualified workers and have the most potential for expanding the state's economy. Another project goal is equipping Arkansas colleges with the tools they need to better educate future K-12 teachers in these core subjects.

The districts and the tech center were designated by the cabinet to participate either in Project Lead the Way or the New Tech Network. The New Tech high school model integrates STEM education and extensive project-based learning throughout the curriculum. Project Lead the Way includes several introductory courses in engineering or biomedical sciences that show how basic concepts taught in the classroom are used in the work world.

"Our goal was to have 10 STEM Works schools for the 2012-2013 school year and we've surpassed that," said Arkansas Education Commissioner Dr. Tom Kimbrell.

"We'll all work together to make sure these schools are successful and can be models for schools seeking to participate in the future."

Joining Project Lead the Way are Gravette, Jonesboro, Prairie Grove, Riverview, and Star City. The Northark Technical Center, which serves 14 districts in northern

Arkansas, was also chosen for Project Lead the Way.

Named as New Tech districts were Arkadelphia, Dumas, El Dorado, Highland, Hope, Marked Tree, Riverview (which was also chosen for Project Lead the Way), Russellville and Van Buren.

Lincoln and Cross County began participating in New Tech this school year, and they were also awarded grants by the cabinet as part of STEM Works. On Monday, Cross County and Lincoln each were granted conversion charters by the State Board of Education, which will help provide flexibility to operate New Tech programs.

New Tech schools will receive \$150,000 each while Lincoln and Cross County, as existing New Tech schools, will each receive \$75,000. Project Lead the Way schools will each receive varying amounts up to about \$95,000, depending on need.

“As a state, we have a moral obligation to all of our students — not just the top 5 or 10 percent — to offer the STEM skills that will be required in every 21st-century career,” said Arkansas Department of Career Education Director William L. “Bill” Walker, Jr. “STEM Works will expand the opportunities for more students to explore careers in STEM fields.”

The Governor's Workforce Cabinet includes the Governor's Office, the Department of Education, the Department of Career Education, the Department of Higher Education, the Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority, and the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges.

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